

AUG 21 2000

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RECEIVED
VENTURA, CA
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August 16, 2000

Carl Benz and Greg Sanders
U S Fish & Wildlife Service
2493 Portola Road #B
Ventura CA 93003

Re: 1} Southern Sea Otter Recovery Team Criteria for Choosing Individuals
2} Comments: Formal Opinion on Otter-free Zone

The continuing coverage in the media, [before the Harbor Commission of Morro Bay], and video presentations by Sea Otter Recovery Team Consultants of sea otters exterminating shellfish populations, is causing confusion here on the Central Coast. The use of the title '*Technical Consultant to the Sea Otter Recovery Team*' makes an individual look very knowledgeable, but when only partial information is distributed, and when articles appear to point to sea otters decimating ocean resources - but not that people have, readers receive a very mixed message. This message fuels a division between 'Friends of the Otter' and Fishermen. This message fuels a fight over ocean resources. This message could take a long time to be changed to a more balanced truth.

Certainly there are different opinions about fishing issues. But the truth is that humans have greatly altered the balance of sustainable resources and the question is how to return to sustainable yields of fish and shellfish.

Please revise the criteria to choose technical consultants to threatened and endangered species recovery teams to omit individuals who would use the title to attack species and include individuals who present all the pieces of the recovery story, not just one side.

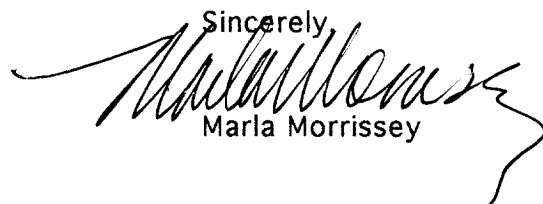
Fishermen and otters are both predators searching for their prey and move to where it is. Otters surely know if they need to expand their range, just as fishermen have in pursuit of their harvest. As they compete for the same resource it is important to say so. As that resource declines it is imperative for Agencies such as Fish & Wildlife to step in - as some predators would take the last individuals of a species without ability to stop themselves.

- I strongly support the changes US F&WS is making to the Recovery Plan for the Southern Sea Otter to allow freedom of the species to expand their range.

- I ask that US F&WS review their criteria for technical consultant appointments and renew the Recovery Team to disallow individuals using the title as a pulpit for damaging the reputation of a species with media attacks which create community backlash.

- I recommend an addition to Recovery Teams of a consultant who can communicate the need to protect and preserve Ocean Resources, Otters, and Fishermen, and provide models in the Central Coast of co-operation to lead us forward in the recovery of them all.

Sincerely,


Marla Morrissey

cc: Congresswoman Lois Capps - Attn: Greg Haas
Assemblyman Abel Maldonado
Senator Jack O'Connell